

mean what they say. There are Senators on both sides of the aisle who have had the courage to stand up for these important rules when we have been in the minority and when we have been in the majority. I don't have to remind the Senate that the previous President frequently harangued me to nuke the Senate. On every occasion, I had a one-word answer: No. No.

There are Senators on both sides who understand that any supposedly limited "carve-out" would bring the whole house crashing down. There are Senators on both sides who understand that the entirety of Federal law shouldn't go radically boomeranging back and forth every time the Senate narrowly changes hands.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior legislative assistant clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### REMEMBERING DR. JERALD F. COMBS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in eastern Kentucky, one man has been at the center of efforts to expand eye care for nearly 40 years. Dr. Jerald Combs, who passed away last month, played an instrumental role in modernizing and extending access to optometric care across Kentucky's Appalachian region. Today, I recognize Dr. Combs as an outstanding Kentuckian whose work made a vast impact on the lives of his patients.

When Dr. Combs began his practice in Martin, KY, in 1983, optometry in eastern Kentucky was an underdeveloped practice. Many residents lacked access to the eye care they needed, leaving far too many without good vision. Dr. Combs made it his mission to change that status quo and improved many lives in the process. His clinic served the entire eastern Kentucky region, attracting patients from far and wide who needed his care.

Perhaps Dr. Combs' greatest legacy will be his efforts to increase optometry training opportunities in his community. Because of his work in this area, the University of Pikeville named their college of optometry in his honor. The school's Jerald F. Combs Endowed

Scholarship gives students of all backgrounds the ability to study the subject, providing expertise to those who will stay in eastern Kentucky and help develop the field further.

Throughout his life, Dr. Combs was committed to serving his community and our Commonwealth and earned many awards for his efforts. The Kentucky Optometric Association lavished him with praise, granting him both their Optometrist of the Year Award and Distinguished Service Award twice. He also served as president and a board member of the association for many years. Outside of optometry, Dr. Combs helped his community through the Knott County Youth Foundation, the Knott County Little League, the Kiwanis Club, and the Hazard Lions Club. He served on the University of Pikeville Board of Trustees, steering the school to success.

I knew Dr. Combs personally and was saddened to learn of his passing last month. Few Kentuckians play as big or instrumental of a role in their community as he did. While we all mourn his loss, we can also be confident that his legacy, expanded access to eye care among Kentucky's most vulnerable communities, will last for many years into the future. I would like to express my personal gratitude for Dr. Combs' decades of service to the Commonwealth and encourage my Senate colleagues to join me in sharing condolences with the family, friends, and colleagues.

### RECOGNIZING OWENSBORO, THE "BLUEGRASS CAPITAL OF THE WORLD"

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, few Kentucky creations have had as much impact on American culture as Bluegrass music. It is the spring from which all other country music flows and one of our State's most world-renowned exports. Owensboro, KY, has played an important role in maintaining and promoting Bluegrass history, style, and heritage and, in recognition of that work, was recently named the Bluegrass Capital of the World. Today, I honor Owensboro for earning this title and helping preserve Kentucky's proud Bluegrass culture.

Owensboro's deep connection to Bluegrass music dates back to the genre's earliest days. Bill Monroe, widely recognized as the "Father of Bluegrass", was born just outside Owensboro in Ohio County, KY. His musical group, the Blue Grass Boys, adapted the unique style of music they found in Scotch-Irish communities in Kentucky's Appalachian foothills and popularized it for a mainstream audience. Listeners, entranced by Blue Grass Boys' soaring melodies, jaunty rhythm, and homespun style, started a craze for Bluegrass music that brought national fame to generations of Kentucky artists.

Owensboro's leaders have recognized their unique role in Bluegrass history

and sought to capitalize on that connection. City officials ushered in the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and Museum in downtown Owensboro in 1991, inviting both tourists and locals to learn about and enjoy Bluegrass history. The city's annual "River of Music Party", or ROMP, welcomes more than 20,000 visitors to the banks of the Ohio River to celebrate Bluegrass artists and help sustain this proud Kentucky tradition. And just recently, Owensboro Mayor Tom Watson signed the official proclamation naming his city the Bluegrass Capital of the World, cementing Owensboro's important place in Bluegrass history.

Owensboro's leaders have also initiated a strong campaign to educate and popularize Bluegrass among the next generation of Kentuckians. The Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame and Museum features rotating exhibits highlighting key parts of Bluegrass history and hosts artists that promote the genre. The museum offers lessons in musical instruments like the mandolin, banjo, and fiddle, helping ensure the survival of their unique sounds and style. The museum's Bluegrass in the Schools program has introduced Bluegrass music to nearly 10,000 elementary students, including in 24 Owensboro-area schools, connecting young Kentuckians with their State's culture and history.

Bluegrass music is the soundtrack of Kentucky. From the first pluck of the banjo, strum of the guitar, or drone of the fiddle, the genre is immediately recognizable. Owensboro's leaders have done incredible, extensive work to preserve and promote this unique Kentucky music and are incredibly deserving of their city's recent designation as Bluegrass Capital of the World.

Mr. President, the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer highlighted the city's new title in a recent article. I ask unanimous consent the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer,  
Nov. 24, 2021]

#### BLUEGRASS CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

The City of Owensboro has officially been designated the "Bluegrass Capital of the World" after more than a year of effort by the city and the Bluegrass Hall of Fame and Museum.

Mayor Tom Watson officially signed the proclamation permanently linking Owensboro and bluegrass music during a Nov. 12 ceremony at the Bluegrass Hall of Fame and Museum.

"About 15 months ago we started talking about this idea, and it has taken a little while to get it to this point, but we are here today to declare the City of Owensboro as the Bluegrass Music Capital of the World," Watson said during the event.

Watson called Chris Joslin, museum executive director, to the stage and asked him to turn around so he could officially sign the proclamation on his back, telling him, "a lot of this is going to be on your back."

"The idea is to create a sustainable structure and utilize our bluegrass music presence to build out economic development opportunities and increase tourism," Watson said.

"In short, attract new businesses that manufacture or provide services that are consumed outside our community connected to bluegrass music and attract people to Owensboro, the epicenter of bluegrass music."

Joslin said Owensboro began celebrating its bluegrass heritage during the early 1980s, when a concert series was formed pairing bluegrass artists with the Owensboro Symphony Orchestra.

"I think it demonstrated that bluegrass music could be a differentiator for this community, creating something unique, creating something that no other community has," he said.

Joslin said the opening of the Bluegrass Hall of Fame and Museum at 311 West 2nd St. in Owensboro in 2018 signaled to the world that the organization means business and is part of an economic strategy that begins with cultural tourism, and can grow as more and more people and industry related to the music industry comes to the city.

"I have said before that I believe that most communities like ours, they want to be known for something," Joslin said. "Something that matters, something that is authentic and compelling, something that has a positive, tangible impact on their community. I can tell you that if the news of that something extends beyond the city limits and the county line, well there is opportunity there, and opportunity attracts people, it attracts investment."

"Friends, I can tell you that this is our time, this is our opportunity, and we are claiming it today as the Bluegrass Music Capital of the World."

Mike Simpson, chairman of the International Bluegrass Music Association, provided a brief history of the bluegrass musical genre.

"The odyssey of this original American art form started right down the road here in Ohio County, and much of its history can be traced right here to Owensboro, Kentucky," Simpson said.

Simpson cited early bluegrass musicians Arnold Schultz, Pendleton Vandiver and his grandfather, Cleveland Baize, as forging a music combining Irish, Scottish and blues music.

"Pendleton Vandiver had a nephew by the name of William Smith Monroe that listened to that music, and he and his brothers, Charlie and Birch, they left Ohio County and they took it to the world," Simpson said. "In 1936 they signed a record deal with RCA Victor, and soon the bluegrass music was being spread across radio airwaves across this country."

Simpson said in 1945, bluegrass came to the Grand Ole Opry at Nashville's famed Ryman Auditorium when Chubby Wise, Howard Watts, Lester Flat and Earl Scruggs stepped onto the stage.

"That was bluegrass' sonic boom," Simpson said.

Today, bluegrass is a celebrated part of Owensboro's culture. With the only dedicated Bluegrass Hall of Fame and Museum, the annual ROMP Festival attracting 25,000 annually to enjoy bluegrass and roots music, as well as bluegrass-themed media being created in Owensboro, it has become ingrained in the city's culture.

Simpson said Owensboro being officially known and celebrated as the "Bluegrass Capital of the World" was "a long time coming."

#### VOTE EXPLANATION

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 453, David L.

Cohen, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Canada.

Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 454, Mark Gitenstein, of Washington, to be Representative of the United States of America to the European Union, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 521, Jonathan Eric Kaplan, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Singapore.

Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 617, Jamie L. Harpootlian, of South Carolina, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 621, Scott Miller, of Colorado, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Swiss Confederation, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Mr. President, had there been a recorded vote, I would have voted no on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 623, Michael M. Adler, of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Belgium.

#### REMEMBERING ANDREW FRANKLIN ALEXANDER

Mr. HAGERTY. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and Senator BLACKBURN, I ask unanimous consent that the following remarks be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to further honor the life of Andrew Franklin Alexander, the late son of former Tennessee U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

##### HONORING ANDREW FRANKLIN ALEXANDER

Andrew Franklin Alexander, age 52, passed away December 31, 2021 after a short illness. Drew was born in Washington, D.C., on September 21, 1969. He moved with his family to Nashville, TN when he was one year old. He attended Ensforth School, became a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church, and graduated from University School of Nashville. He then attended Kenyon College in Ohio where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music. In 1994 he went to work for Curb Records in Nashville as a receptionist. Quickly he rose to lead the company's publishing division. As Vice President of Pub-

lishing, he oversaw the division's forty-five employees and songwriters. A classically trained guitarist, Drew also directed creative and administrative aspects of the company where he set budgets, signed songwriters, negotiated contracts, placed songs, and acquired catalogs.

During his tenure Curb Music Publishing earned eighty-seven ASCAP, BMI and SESAC performance awards, and set records for the fastest rising country single and the longest charting country single in Billboard Country chart history. In 2017, after 23 years at Curb, Drew stepped down from his role as Director of Publishing but continued working with the Mike Curb Foundation. Drew also founded his own company, Blair Branch Music. He became an active community volunteer working with numerous Nashville agencies including Second Harvest Food Bank, Nashville Rescue Mission, and Room at the Inn. Drew's motto was "give more than you take". When he wasn't on the phone raising money for the needy he often could be found serving lunch at homeless shelters.

Drew served on the boards of The Recording Academy, Belmont School of Music, Family and Children's Service, the Community Resource Center, Leadership Music as Treasurer, and the Tennessee Residence Foundation as Secretary. He was a member of the Country Music Association, the Gospel Music Association, Academy of Country Music, and the Downtown Nashville Rotary Club.

Drew helped many artists and songwriters get their start in Nashville and had many friends in the music industry. Over the years he hosted small groups of songwriters and artists, including Lee Brice, Bill Anderson, Kyle Jacobs, Billy Montana, Kelsea Ballerini and many others, at writing retreats at his family's home at Blackberry Farm in East Tennessee, at Evins Mill in Middle Tennessee, and at Bending Lake in Canada. From these dozens of sessions came more than 1,000 songs including many hits. Drew was active with the National Songwriters Association defending songwriters' legal rights.

Drew loved his daughters, his friends and watching sports with them all, especially the Tennessee Titans and University of Tennessee basketball and football—and he loved to fish, traveling around the world in pursuit of new adventures. Drew is survived by two daughters, Lauren Blair Alexander and Helen Victoria Alexander of Nashville; his parents, Honey and Lamar Alexander of Walland, TN; two sisters, Leslee Alexander of Maryville, TN and Kathryn Alexander of Briarcliff Manor, NY; his brother, Will Alexander of Nashville; and, seven nieces and nephews. The Alexander family wishes to express our thanks to Drew's friends Bruce Phillips and Hal Hardin for their many kindnesses to him.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### REMEMBERING JOHN VICTOR AMROL, JR.

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor to pay tribute to John Victor Amrol, Jr., a long-time New Hampshire resident, State employee, and labor advocate who passed away recently at the age of 85. Born in our State capital of Concord, John was in many ways a quintessential Granite Stater. He had a warm personality, an exceptional work ethic, and a passion